

Dover Air Force Base (DAFB) Compatible Use Study Public Engagement Strategy

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Prepared by Century Engineering, Inc

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SECTION I: OVERVIEW

This strategic public engagement plan establishes the process and procedures for effective outreach to the Compatible Use Study. Significant public outreach results in greater community support and input into the planning process and the future for the areas surrounding the Dover Air Force Base (DAFB). The Outreach Plan not only fulfills federal requirements, but also serves as a working tool for the project staff to ensure that adequate public notice is given, and the community is engaged throughout the project. It can also be referenced by community members to learn about opportunities for involvement.

GOALS FOR OUTREACH:

- 1) Provide opportunities to include the public in the planning process
- 2) Increase the accessibility and transparency of information available to the public
- 3) Increase the efficiency of the public outreach process
- 4) Provide the public with more ways to be heard in the planning process
- 5) Make final decisions that meet the needs of all stakeholders in the study area

The Planning Process

Figure 1 shows an overview of the planning process. While the complete process is far more complex, this diagram offers a general summary of the planning procedures and components that result in our current transportation system.



Figure 1. Planning Process

ABOUT THE COMPATABLE USE STUDY

Purpose

This Compatible Use Study (also known as Military Installation Sustainability) is a strategic planning process undertaken by state or local government in partnership with the military installation to preserve and protect military readiness and defense capabilities, seek ways to reduce the operational impacts on adjacent lands, and support community growth and economic development. A Compatible Use Study is a key tool for compatible land use planning.

Goals

- Enhance communication and understanding between major stakeholders
- Improve collaboration
- Implement strategies
- Inform citizens

Figure 2 illustrates the study area and the geographic extent of the public outreach and engagement. These are not hard boundaries, but a graphical representation of the areas and people that will be engaged through the planning process.

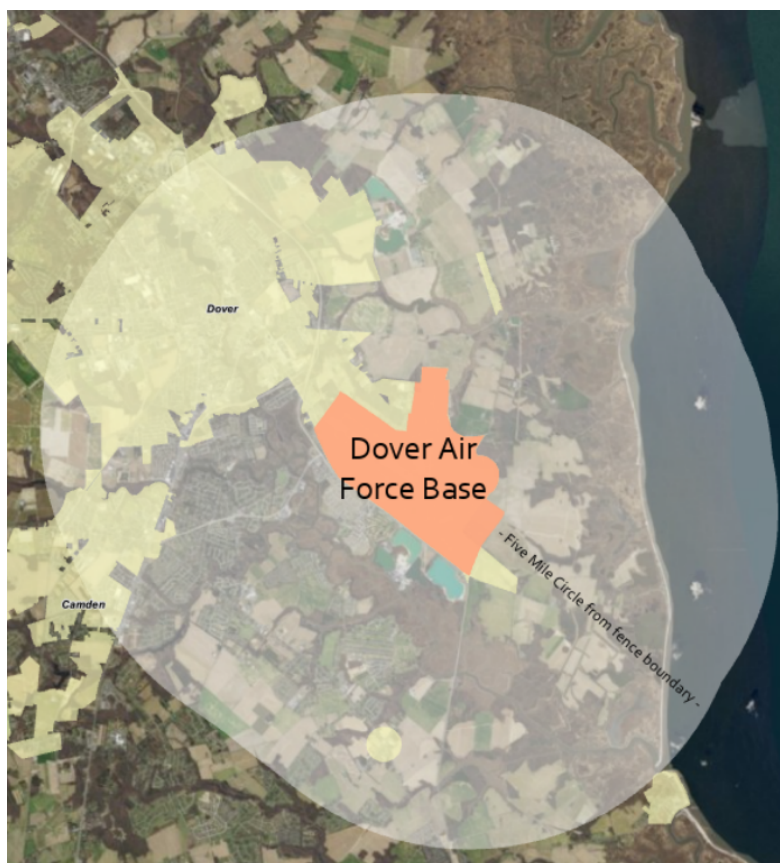


Figure 2. Study Area

OUTREACH AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PUBLIC

Our goal through this project is to not only meet the regulatory requirements for public outreach and engagement but also provide meaningful opportunities that will enhance public input, increase accountability, and maximize transparency. This framework will allow this project to go above and beyond the general policies by outlining measures and strategies based on needs and potential impact. Examples of these measures include outreach to specific target populations, public notice in newspapers or other media outlets in addition to those used regularly, pop-up meetings at events or locations where the target audience can be found, and other similar efforts.

Another way this project will reach the public is through the Technical Committee and Policy Committee. The Technical Committee is primarily made up of planners and engineers from surrounding municipalities, county government, State agencies, and other stakeholders. They will review plans and policies before they are sent to the Policy Committee and are active in implementation of plans and programs. Through this study both committees will be charged with being ambassadors and communication portals for outreach and accountability to the public.

SECTION II: FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS

Stakeholder involvement will be achieved through the techniques, practices, and strategies outlined in this plan. This plan will adhere to the applicable federal and state requirements including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Title VI. It is the goal of this project to allow equal access for public participation in the planning process. To that end the project team will ensure that all have equal access to information, meeting locations, input opportunities and a voice during the development of the plan.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires coordination with people with disabilities during the planning process to ensure access to information and meeting locations. Planners, engineers, and builders must provide access for the disabled at sidewalks and ramps, street crossings, and in parking or transit access facilities. Individuals with disabilities must also be able to access sites where public involvement activities occur and where information is posted or presented.

TITLE VI AND NONDISCRIMINATION

This plan and the associated public outreach and engagement will be in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 42 USC 2000d; related statutes and regulations to the end that no person shall be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin.

In addition, the DelDOT Title VI plan will be followed to ensure transportation planning process. The Title VI plan focuses primarily on minority, low income, and limited English proficient populations.

SECTION III: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

TRANSPARENT, USER-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES

Principles

The Outreach Plan seeks to establish a realistic and forward-thinking philosophy for public outreach for the Compatible Use Study. To do this, the Outreach Plan defines meaningful requirements and promotes best practices.

Understandable and Interesting Language / No Jargon

Meeting notices and materials will use appropriate, understandable language — acronyms and other technical jargon will be avoided as much as possible (for a helpful Transportation Planning Glossary, see Appendix E). Efforts are made to create advertising, project campaigns, and slogans that generate the most interest possible. The project team will make reasonable efforts to address identified language barriers in order to provide meaningful access to information on its plans and programs.

Use of Visual Tools

Visualization techniques are used to enhance the public's understanding of the project whenever possible. This is most important where it can simplify confusing information through the use of diagrams and maps. Infographics can also be a very effective way to communicate complex technical material and ideas in an easily digested format for stakeholders and the public.

MEETING FORMATS AND DESCRIPTIONS

The following is a brief description of the meeting types that we expect to deploy as part of the project. This is just a brief description of the format and anticipated outcomes.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the need for a variety of methods to reach out to the community and stakeholders was never more evident. Based on this need, this public involvement strategy will provide options for meeting formats in three ways: live/in-person meetings, virtual meetings through an on-line platform such as ZOOM, and hybrid meetings where there is a live component in combination with a virtual method. Depending on the restrictions in place at the time of the scheduled outreach, in conjunction with a general consensus from the policy and technical committees, each event scheduled for this study maybe held in any of the formats stated previously (live/in-person, virtual only, hybrid).

Meeting Types

- ☐ Public meeting
- ☐ Charrette/workshop
- ☐ Legislative Briefings
- ☐ Pop-up meeting
- ☐ Open house
- ☐ Small group meeting
- ☐ Town hall meetings
- ☐ Technical Committee and Policy Committee meetings

Public meetings/Workshop

Public meetings will be informal and there are no formal time limits on statements and the agency and/or the facilitator usually answers questions. The purpose of the meeting is to share information and discuss issues, not to make decisions. Comments made during a public meeting do not become part of the official administrative record. Public meetings provide two-way communication, with community members asking questions and the agency/facilitator providing responses. There will be 2 public workshops which will be publicly advertised.

Charrette

This strategy will be used to assess the future of the borrow pit site. We anticipate this being a one day gathering of small groups of people, usually between 10 and 30, led by a small number of specialists with technical expertise. As with all public involvement, the Charrette will be one of the three main methods described in this document: live/in-person, virtual, hybrid consisting of both live and virtual opportunities for attendance. During this Charrette, participants will discuss the future land use of the borrow pit area and perform a visioning exercise to determine possible future uses for the borrow pit that would be compatible with maintaining the mission and operations of the base. Technical experts will help explain any potential conflicts with certain land uses and then lead the participants through an exploratory exercise to envision the future of that area.

Legislative Briefings

There will be two specific legislative briefings to inform the local legislators and elected officials about the study. These briefings will take place just prior to the public workshops so the legislators will have an understanding of the study should any of their constituents contact them. Since land use decisions are primarily left up to local decision makers, the Policy Committee will assist in identifying the best legislators to brief. We anticipate local, elected officials, as well as, state legislators attending the briefings.

Pop-up meeting

A pop-up meeting is another alternative to traditional public meetings. It is a unique, interactive way to encourage community engagement with people who are not usually included by meeting them where they already are. The project team will look for opportunities to help communicate the goal of the project and gain public comment through partnering with the technical committee members and leverage existing meetings and gatherings as opportunities to gain more public input on the study.

Small group meetings

These are meetings with small groups and stakeholders to gain specific information concerning the study. Meetings could be with homeowners or neighborhood groups, civic groups, special interest groups, or other groups of affected or interested parties.

Town hall meetings

These meeting formats are more informal than board meetings and allow the public and members of the representative organization to interact. The main purpose of this type of meeting is to develop open communication between the members and those individuals who control the organization or committee.

Technical Committee and Policy Committee meetings

The Technical Committee is made up of representatives from agencies that are considered major stakeholders. The committee will review information and data and help guide the development of the plan and the potential resolution strategies. The Technical Committee will preview all materials before they are presented to the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee will be kept informed as the study

progresses and will ultimately adopt the study.

TOOLS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Participation Tools

- ☐ Comment cards and comment forms
- ☐ Stakeholder and community interviews
- ☐ Surveys and questionnaires
- ☐ Visual preference surveys

Comment cards and comment forms

Comment cards will be made available at every public meeting and all participants are encouraged to fill one out. Comment forms are often used to solicit public comments on specific issues presented at a workshop.

Stakeholder and community interviews

Stakeholder and community interviews will be conducted either face-to-face or by telephone interviews with key local residents, local elected officials, community group representatives and other stakeholders to determine concerns and issues.

Surveys and questionnaires

Surveys will be used throughout the public engagement process specifically during the public meetings and charrette. These will be integrated into the presentations to keep attendees engaged in the process and demonstrate the value of public opinion.

Visual preference survey

A visual preference survey asks participants to rate images of development and facilities based on their initial reaction. A primary goal of this technique is to offer those who are not experts in planning a way to participate by evaluating the desirable and undesirable physical, visual, and spatial features of transportation systems and development.

Web based mapping

A GIS online mapping tool will be developed so the data sets to be viewed in map form which will allow all the stakeholders the ability to compare all the data sets interactively. This tool will help inform the compatibility assessment and provide the public with the opportunity to zoom to a specific area of the study and see potential compatibility issues. It can also be used to map specific strategies as they are developed.

TOOLS FOR INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Information Dissemination Tools

- ☐ Ambassadors
- ☐ Direct and email mailings
- ☐ Newsletters
- ☐ Fact sheets
- ☐ Posters and flyers
- ☐ Media releases

- ☐ Presentations: videos and PowerPoint
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Webcasts
- ☐ Websites

Ambassadors

We will be asking all Technical and Policy Committee members to serve as ambassadors to the study and help to disseminate information and help inform the public about the study and the upcoming public engagements. The ambassadors will also assist in developing the list of stakeholders identified for community engagement and involvement.

Direct and email mailings

Direct and email mailings will be used to announce upcoming meetings or activities and provide information about the Study. Direct mailings could be postcards, letters, or fliers. Meeting reminders will be sent out in advance of committee meeting and public engagement meetings. An area may be targeted for a mailing because of potential impacts from study and efforts are made to include low-income, minority, disabled, and Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) populations. In order to continue expanding the database, members of the public will be asked if they would like to be included on it when comment forms are dispensed and collected at public meetings.

Newsletters

Email newsletters will be used for ongoing communication as well as to send out updates or notifications on an as needed basis. The goal is to develop a mailing list of interested parties, municipalities, media, and other agencies who have voluntarily added their name and address to the list. Each issue of the newsletter will include contact information, upcoming meetings and events.

Fact sheets

Fact sheets provide summary information about the study. Fact sheets can be distributed at public meetings, on the website, and public places such as community centers.

Posters and flyers

Posters and flyers will be used to announce meetings and events. We will work with the technical committee on placement of the flyers and posters to have the most impact. Some options include government centers, neighborhood shops, religious institutions, social service agencies, employment centers, bus stops/transit hubs, the interior of buses, senior centers, public health clinics, public libraries, community centers and popular meeting places.

Media releases

Press releases are official announcements will be used to advertise the public engagement opportunities. These will most often be used to announce public meetings, surveys and events, and to report the results of studies.

Presentations: videos and PowerPoint

Videos and PowerPoint presentations will be used as informational tools and to document public involvement events. These visual tools will be used for all the meetings and public engagements.

These visual tools will be used to enhance the public's understanding of the study and the data behind

the decision making. This includes using graphics, video, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), which are all very effective ways to communicate complex technical material and ideas.

Social media

It is the intent of the project team to create a social media presence for the project leveraging existing social media platforms of the partnering agencies. This platform will be used to disseminate information about the study, advertise upcoming engagement opportunities and provide a opportunities for additional public input.

Webcasts

Webcasting will be used to provide a recording of the public workshops that will archived online. This allows those who are interested but unable to attend a meeting to participate and view it on their own time. These techniques are also beneficial for those who are sight or hearing impaired, as webcast presentations can be enhanced to meet the needs of all citizens.

Websites

The project will have a website hosted by DelDOT that will be the repository for all the committee meeting agendas, minutes, and draft materials, as well as public outreach efforts and materials.

Participation Notification

	<i>Technical Committee, Policy Committee</i>	<i>Elected Official Briefing</i>	<i>Public Workshop #1</i>	<i>Stakeholder Meetings</i>	<i>Charrette</i>	<i>Public Workshop # 2</i>	<i>Final Report</i>
<i>Website</i>	X		X		X	X	X
<i>Newspaper</i>			X		X	X	X
<i>Mass mailing</i>			X		X	X	X
<i>Email</i>	X	X		X		X	
<i>Poster</i>			X		X	X	X
<i>Newsletter</i>	X		X		X	X	X
<i>Phone</i>		X		X			

